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CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM
OPERATIONAL MEMO #14**

TO: Child and Adult Care Food Program Sponsors

FROM: Mary Ann Chartrand, Director
Grants Coordination and School Support

DATE: June 16, 2004

SUBJECT: **Mealtime Memo for Child Care**

Enclosed are three issues of the *Mealtime Memo for Child Care*. The titles are, "Promoting A Healthy Lifestyle," "Purchasing for Child Care Centers," and "Stretching the Food Dollar."

Developed by the National Food Service Management Institute, these publications reinforce the importance of the Food Guide Pyramid and emphasize that physical activity will help children grow healthy. Subsequent issues of the *Mealtime Memo for Child Care* will be provided when published.

If you have any questions regarding this publication, you may contact the Child and Adult Care Food Program staff at (517) 373-7391.

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Purchasing for Child Care Centers

If your child care center has been anxiously waiting for a resource to help with steps in the purchasing process your patience will soon be rewarded. The National Food Service Management Institute is pleased to announce the impending completion of a procurement manual for child care centers. Content for the manual was developed by procurement specialist Marlene Gunn and is specifically targeted for use by staff in independent child care centers serving 25 or more children and adults. Both the participant manual and instructor guide will be available for purchase from NFSMI in the early fall. These resources will also be available online at www.nfsmi.org for easy downloading. Recognizing that child care centers are diverse, both in size and organizational makeup, the *Procurement for Child Care Centers* manual contains three types of information:

- information that applies to all centers regardless of size or sophistication,
- information that applies to small independent centers, and
- information that applies to new and growing sponsoring organizations.

Some challenging questions you have raised about the whole purchasing process will now be answered in the *Procurement for Child Care Centers* manual.

What does procurement mean?

Procurement and purchasing mean the same thing and are often used interchangeably in the procurement manual. Purchasing involves several steps, starting with menu planning and ending with food preparation. The steps in the *purchasing process* are:

- planning menus
- developing a list of the foods needed to prepare the menus

- estimating the quantity of each food needed
- analyzing the market area
- developing quality standards for each food
- obtaining price quotes
- awarding the business or making a recommendation to the board of directors.
- placing orders
- receiving food or going to the store to purchase food
- storing food
- preparing meals.

Why do we need a grocery list?

A grocery list is one of the tools in planning quality menus. It is a very necessary step of the procurement process and a time-consuming one as well. The grocery list is divided into three parts:

- standard stock items
- yearly items
- menu items

What are standard stock items and what are some examples of foods in this category?

Standard stock items are foods that are kept on hand all of the time and include foods such as all purpose flour, granulated sugar, salt, vegetable oil, and catsup.



What are yearly items?

Foods that the center uses in small amounts and buys only once or twice per year are yearly items. Herbs and spices fall into this category.

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What are menu items?

Milk, fresh fruits and vegetables, and fresh eggs fall into this category, and are only purchased when they are on the menu.

How do I estimate the amount of food I need to buy?

To estimate quantities for menu items use the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG)¹ as a resource. The procurement manual will review how to calculate quantities using the FBG.

Why do I have to review purchasing rules before I buy groceries, supplies, or equipment?

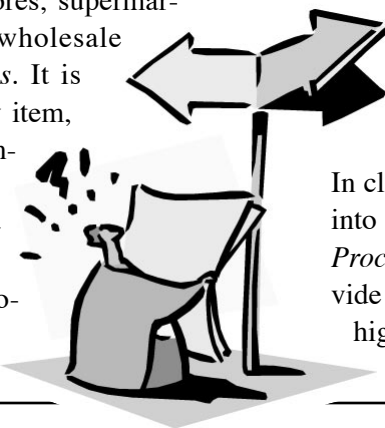
Laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and rules are all words used to tell you what to do when purchasing for your center. Laws are written by State Legislatures or the Federal Congress. Regulations are written by Federal agencies and sometimes by State agencies. Policies and procedures are written by local agencies. Your center's board of directors is an example of a local agency.

Can I choose where to buy food and supplies for my child care center?

Your choices of places to buy food and supplies depend on the community where your center is located. Some possible choices could include specialty stores, local grocery stores, supermarkets, wholesale grocery distributors and institutional distributors.

What is the difference between a retail and a wholesale vendor?

Specialty stores, local grocery stores, supermarkets, institutional jobbers, and wholesale clubs are basically *retail vendors*. It is possible to buy one of almost any item, at a higher price from a retail vendor. The advantage is you have purchased the exact amount needed which is important to cost and inventory control. Wholesale grocery and institutional distributors are *wholesale vendors*.



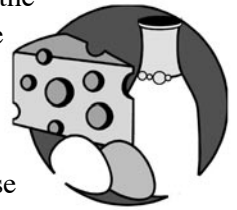
Normally you must purchase a full case of a food item for example, 6 #10 cans of green beans or a 20# lug of fresh tomatoes. The price may be lower per unit when purchasing at a wholesale price but the child care center may not have enough storage space to purchase full cases, or the size of the inventory may be of concern.

Why is controlling my inventory so important?

Controlling inventory will reduce food cost, waste, and theft; the need for cash to pay bills; the need for storage, and the risk of spoilage.

What does Standard of Identity mean and what are some examples?

Standards of identity² are developed by the Federal government and control the name of some food. Some examples of single ingredient food items are eggs, cheese, and milk. Other foods actually have more than one ingredient, but these are simple foods that have been on the market for many years and their manufacturing processes are stable. Some examples are mayonnaise and catsup.



When I purchase from a wholesale vendor do I have to worry about writing food specifications?

Specifications are not generally appropriate for child care centers because they are lengthy technical documents that are not cost-effective for smaller food purchases. However, you must have good written **food descriptions** to determine the quality of food that will be delivered to your center. A description is limited to those food characteristics that can be measured at the kitchen door, or are absolutely necessary to communicate with a vendor.

In closing, this fact sheet has provided just a brief glimpse into the great quantity of information that is found in the *Procurement for Child Care Centers* manual. It will provide a child care center with vital information as to finding high-quality, nutritious food that is safe and that can be purchased at a cost-effective price.

Sources

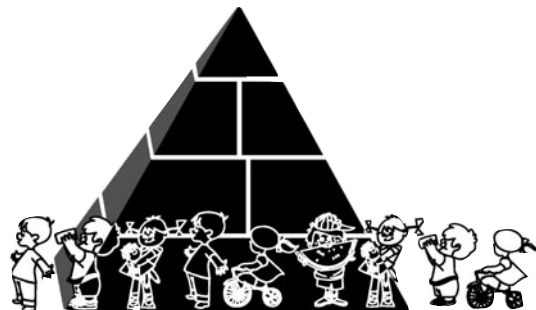
¹ Food Buying Guide. Retrieved February 11, 2004, from <http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/FBG/buyingguide.html>

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, with the National Food Service Management Institute. (2002). First choice: A purchasing systems manual for school food service. 2nd Ed. University, MS: National Food Service Management Institute.

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FOR CHILD CARE



2004

Promoting A Healthy Lifestyle

Be A Role Model

Helping children develop a healthy lifestyle—including healthy eating and physical activity—begins at home. However, it is also important that these behaviors are reinforced in the childcare setting. Parents and caregivers can help children to be active and make smart food choices by modeling these behaviors themselves. Here is some guidance to help you promote a healthy lifestyle when working with children.

Encourage Healthy Eating

Serve appropriate portions of food at meal and snack times. Over-portioning encourages overeating and may lead to undesirable weight gain. Making healthy foods available encourages children to try them. A designated area for meals and snacks along with a fairly consistent meal schedule helps children form healthy habits and discourages snacking in front of the TV or computer.

Children should not be overly restricted in the foods they consume. Remember, the goal is to promote the development of healthy habits, not obsession with food or body weight. Severe diet restrictions should only be followed when advised by an appropriate health care professional. In addition, food should not be used for reward or punishment. Use family or childcare group activities, stickers, or small trinkets as rewards.

What About Food Labels?

Food labels can be invaluable in making smart food choices. The nutritional information on the label is based on the serving size. Compare your serving with the serving size on the label. A serving may be smaller than you realized.

The terms “low-fat,” “reduced fat,” or “light” are frequently seen on food packages. These foods often have added sugar and may have as many calories as their regular counterparts.

How Do You Decide Which to Buy?

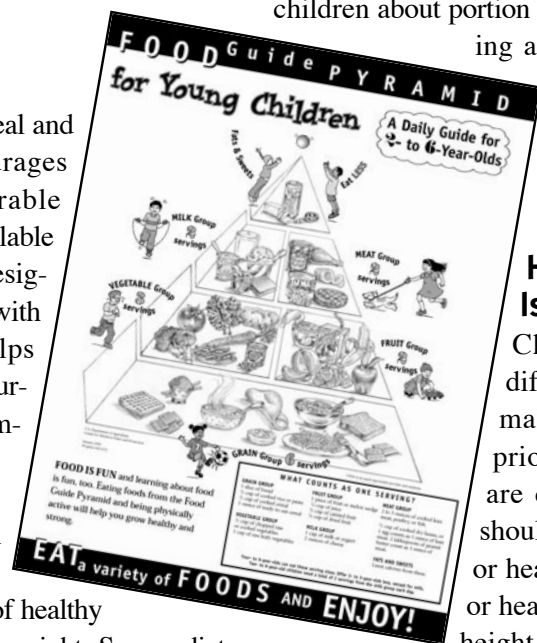
In addition to food labels, the *Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children* can be a useful tool to help you teach children about portion sizes and the importance of consuming a variety of foods from the various

food groups. The Pyramid may be accessed from the Web at <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/index.html>.

How Do You Know If A Child Is Overweight?

Children grow at different rates at different times. In addition, it is normal for children to gain weight just prior to a growth spurt. Parents who are concerned about a child's weight should discuss it with their pediatrician or health care provider. The pediatrician or health care provider can track a child's height and weight over time and let you

know if the child is in a healthy range. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that initial therapy for young children who are overweight should focus on decreasing or minimizing weight gain rather than promoting weight loss. This approach allows the child's height to catch up with his or her weight while still consuming sufficient calories for growth. Children need to know, however, that they are loved and accepted regardless of their weight.



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Encourage Physical Activity

Just as children tend to model the eating behaviors they observe from the adults around them, they also are more likely to be physically active if the adults in their life are active as well. Regular group physical activities should be planned in the child care setting as well as at home. Offer a variety of physical activities and allow children opportunities to choose the ones they like best. Children are more likely to want to participate and to look forward to physical activity if it is fun. Activities may include traditional games and sports as well as outings such as field trips that involve walking. In addition to providing health benefits, regular physical activity can be educational, teach social skills, and boost the child's self-esteem. Here are some physical activities you may want to try:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| ■ Biking | ■ Catch |
| ■ Bowling | ■ Freeze tag |
| ■ Hiking | ■ Hopscotch |
| ■ Dancing | ■ Ice skating |
| ■ Flying a kite | ■ Swimming |

Parents and caregivers should provide a safe area for the children to play, safety gear recommended for specific sports, and appropriate supervision.

In Summary

Your role in promoting a healthy lifestyle can impact children – not just while they are growing up, but for the remainder of their lives. Being a role model for healthy eating and physical activity benefits you as well as the children in your care. Remember that forming healthy habits occurs over time – not overnight. Be patient. Praise children for moving in the right direction. Even small changes can have a big impact over time.

Lunch or Supper Meal Pattern For Children Ages 3-5

1 milk, fluid	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
2 fruits/vegetables	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
1 grains/bread	$\frac{1}{2}$ slice
1 meat/meat alternate	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce

Lunch Menu

- $\frac{1}{2}$ Tortilla Roll-Up
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Shredded Lettuce and Diced Tomato
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Strawberries
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Milk

Tortilla Roll-Up- One-half filled tortilla roll-up provides 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz of cooked poultry and the equivalent of 1 slice of bread.*

- 13 enriched flour tortillas, 8-inch (1.8 oz each)
- $3\frac{1}{4}$ cups Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ qts. chicken or turkey, cooked, diced
- 2 cups mild salsa, chunky
- 1 Tbsp 2 tsp onions, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup red bell pepper, seeded, minced (optional)

1. Sprinkle $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of shredded cheese on each tortilla.
2. In a bowl combine chicken or turkey, salsa, onions, and red pepper. Spread $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of chicken or turkey mixture on tortilla. Roll like a jellyroll.
3. Place 13 rolled tortillas in a steam table pan (12"x 20"x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ "). Cover with foil.
4. To Bake: Conventional Oven: 375 degrees F, 15 minutes
Convection Oven: 325 degrees F, 15 minutes
5. Cut each tortilla in half to serve.
6. Refrigerate until ready to serve if not served immediately.

Web Sites for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Children

American Dietetic Association
www.eatright.org

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org

American Academy of Family Physicians
www.aafp.org

American Medical Association
www.ama-assn.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
<http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/index.html>

The Child Care Nutrition Resource Center
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/childcare/>

Food And Nutrition Information Center
www.nal.usda.gov/fnic

United States Department of Agriculture
Team Nutrition
www.fns.usda.gov/tn

Weight Control Information Network
www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/win.htm

*Child care recipes, food for health and fun. (1999). Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

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For more information, contact NFSMI at 1-800-321-3054 or www.nfsmi.org



Stretching the Food Dollar

Making the best use of your food dollars is a constant challenge, but resourceful child care providers can find many ways to “stretch the food dollar.” Taking part in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is one way to help eligible child care providers pay for meals that meet the requirements of the program. Let’s take a glimpse at some additional ways both providers and parents can offer healthy *and* economical meals to children in their care.

The size of the child care center or home, the size of the kitchen and storage area, and the menu will impact food purchasing decisions. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) *Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals* offers the following helpful tips for food ordering and purchasing for child care centers:

Consider the availability of foods from local suppliers.

If you need to reduce the number of food deliveries, you can plan menus that include fresh produce on consecutive days. Do the same for commercially baked breads.



Operate within a budget and pre-cost your menu.

Keep records of the approximate cost per serving of each menu item in order to determine what each meal will cost as well as the average meal cost per month. You can make substitutions if the average cost of the menu runs too high.

Be aware of price trends and the market availability of various foods.

Identify extremes — items which are very high-priced or those which are very low-priced — with a view to minimizing or maximizing their use in the menu.

Use USDA commodity foods where and when available.

If you receive USDA commodity foods, use them as efficiently and creatively as you would if you had purchased the food.

Keep records of food purchased, used, and available in inventories.

These records help in planning future purchases and menus. Also keep participation records and production records that note acceptability.¹

Practice cost-effective food shopping for child care homes.

While the principles for food purchases for child care homes are similar to child care centers, often the shopping is done at a local grocery store instead of placing orders through vendors. Important tips for cost-effective shopping include:

- Know your budget.
- Plan your menu.
- Use recipes to stretch food dollars.
- Make a shopping list based on your menu.
- Study grocery ads.
- Check unit pricing for cost comparisons.
- Look for coupons for items on your shopping list.



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Smart Shopping Tips for Food Groups

Meats:

- Chicken, turkey, and chuck cuts are usually good buys.
- Light tuna is one of the least expensive kinds of canned fish.
- Eggs make good main dishes.

Milk:

- Use nonfat dry milk or evaporated milk in cooking.
- Buy yogurt in larger containers rather than single-serving containers.

Fruits and Vegetables:

- Buy fresh produce in season for best prices.
- Buy only the amount you can use.
- Compare prices of frozen and canned fruits and vegetables to fresh.
- Buy juice in large containers.

Grains:

- Buy generic brand cereals that are unsweetened.
- Check unit pricing. Usually the heaviest size cereal will cost less per ounce but not always.
- Buy long-cooking rice rather than instant.

Note: Sweets can be expensive. It is best to limit them, since most are low in nutrients, and eating too many sweets may lead to tooth decay.

After you shop, store groceries wisely.

- Refrigerate foods that might spoil quickly.
- Keep canned and dry foods in a cool, dry place.
- Keep your supplies organized.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating not storing.

Food for Thought

Buying in Bulk — Can you save \$\$\$?

Yes, but consider:

- Will you use it?
- Is it the best buy?
- Do you have a safe place to store it?

Coupons — Can you save \$\$\$?

Yes, but consider:

- Will product coupons always be available?
- What is the expiration date?
- Will product maintain freshness before it is used?
- Will participants tire of product before it is used?

Convenience Foods* — Can you save \$\$\$?

Consider the Advantages:

- Save time
- Product consistency
- Use less labor
- Nutrition information

Consider the Disadvantages:

- Cost more
- Often higher in sodium
- May be higher in fat
- Cook cannot control ingredients

*Convenience foods are items that are partially or completely prepared when purchased.

Do a couple of pennies less per ounce make a difference in the yearly food budget?

If Brand A Cereal and the generic store brand cereal are of equal nutritional value and the children like both cereals, which is the better buy? Brand A with \$1 off coupon or generic cereal? Look at the chart below to determine the answer.



PRODUCT	SIZE	PRICE	PRICE WITH COUPON	PRICE PER OUNCE
Brand A Cereal	22 oz	\$3.29	\$2.29	\$.104
Generic Cereal	24 oz	\$1.99	_____	\$.083

The generic cereal is about \$.02 less per ounce. (To figure the price per ounce, divide the price by the number of ounces.)

If you use 20 ounces of cereal each day or 100 ounces each week, in 52 weeks you would use 5,200 ounces. 5,200 ounces times \$.02/oz equals \$104.00 saved in one year on one item!

What if you used only 20 ounces of this cereal per week? You would still save \$20.80 per year!

Sources

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